

## REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-9 are pending herein. Claims 1 and 9 have been amended as supported by, for example, original specification, page 17, lines 3-6.

1. Claims 1-9 were rejected under §102(e) over Malin et al. To the extent that this rejection might be applied against the amended claims, it is respectfully traversed.

Pending independent claims 1 and 9 each recite, among other things, that a repair reservation determining means determines a repair- reservation based on repair-reservable day/time data stored in a repair-reserved data storage means. Pending claims 1 and 9 have each been amended to clarify that the repair reservation determining means rearranges repair-reservations, based on repair estimation times and waiting time periods associated with repairs, to avoid extended waiting time periods between repair-reservations. The applied prior art reference discussed below (Malin et al.) does not disclose or suggest the avoiding extended waiting time periods between repair-reservations limitation now recited in each of pending claims 1 and 9.

The presently claimed process control system (claim 1) and computer readable storage medium (claim 9) advantageously allow for the rearranging of repair-reservations to avoid or minimize the time that workers are idle when performing certain tasks. For example, a paint operator can be freed up to perform other tasks instead of being idle while waiting a certain amount of time for a first coat of paint to dry before applying a subsequent paint coat. Shop resources, therefore, are greatly maximized by eliminating substantial worker waiting time periods between repair-reservations, thereby efficiency in repair operations can be beneficially improved.

Malin's priority-based system uses shop specific statistics from multiple shops to insure that the best shop for a particular type of repair receives that repair order. The selected

shop completes the repairs based on certain priority factors in order to maximize the likelihood of estimated completion times. In contrast to Malin's priority-based system, pending claims 1 and 9, as discussed above, have each been amended to clarify that the repair reservation determining means rearranges repair-reservations, based on repair estimation times and waiting time periods associated with repairs, to avoid extended waiting time periods between repair-reservations. While Malin's priority-based system acknowledges that shop statistics and certain priority factors can be used in deciding where repair orders are to be placed in resource queues (i.e., a sequence of orders awaiting processing), it is clear that Malin does not even remotely disclose or suggest that repair estimation times and waiting time periods for repairs are taken into account to rearrange repair orders to avoid extended waiting time periods between the repair orders, as claimed. Again, as discussed above, the present invention allows for shop resources to be advantageously maximized by eliminating substantial waiting time periods between repairs, thereby efficiency in repair operations can be beneficially improved.

In addition to the above, the PTO states on page 3 of the Office Action that a user of Malin's system "would calculate the time necessary for the job . . . and cross-correlate this information with shop hours." Calculating the time necessary for the job and cross-correlating that information with shop hours does not in any way disclose or suggest that certain waiting periods within "the time necessary for the job" are taken into consideration to rearrange repair orders such that extended waiting time periods can be avoided altogether or are scheduled to be filled with other tasks. Malin simply does not disclose or suggest each and every limitation recited in pending claims 1 and 9.

In view of all of the foregoing, reconsideration and withdrawal of the §102 rejection over Malin are respectfully requested.

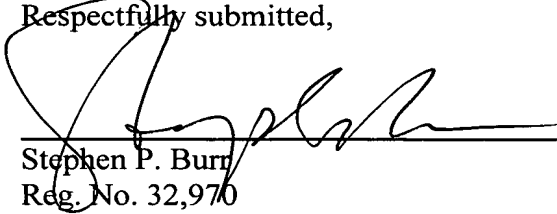
If the Examiner believes that contact with Applicants' attorney would be advantageous toward the disposition of this case, the Examiner is herein requested to call Applicants' attorney at the phone number noted below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1446.

March 19, 2004

Date

Respectfully submitted,

  
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